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DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
**Security Committee**

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SECOM-D-041

24 February 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Community Counterintelligence Staff

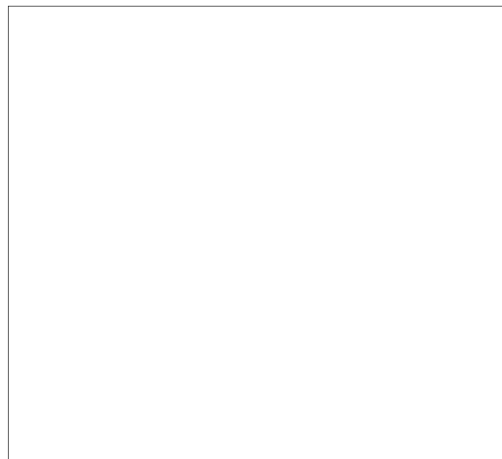
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FROM:

  
Chairman

SUBJECT: SSCI Request for information

In response to your request for SECOM assistance in preparing material for the DCI's reply to the SSCI, the attached is provided. Please advise if anything further is needed.

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Personnel security is the first and most important defense against hostile penetration. An individual who is entrusted with classified material has the greatest potential for devastating damage to security. Personnel security, therefore, must be emphasized and strengthened. The consistent application of constant, uniformly high personnel security standards for access to comparable levels of classified material should be adopted and stringently enforced. These standards must apply equally to civilians, military and contractor personnel of all U.S. agencies as well as citizens of allied foreign countries who have access to the same information.

Personnel security standards are disparate in some cases; in others, commonly accepted standards are unevenly applied. The use of polygraph screening by CIA and NSA, for example, is not matched in other organizations with wholesale access to Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI). As a result of the Geoffrey Prime Case, the British government acknowledged deficiencies in its "positive-vetting" process and ordered more stringent procedures, including tentative use of the polygraph.

Recent espionage cases in the United States, e.g., those of William Holden Bell and James Durward Harper, demonstrate the intrinsic weakness of a system in which a Secret clearance is granted based on National Agency Checks, and the individual's security status is never reexamined. Both the basis for initial access to material of serious consequence to the national security and the continuation of access in perpetuity without further scrutiny represent serious personnel security weaknesses. Unfortunately, the solutions to these problems require extensive resources. Stricter criteria for clearance and continuing security scrutiny of cleared individuals are needed.

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